

March 23, 2011

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

Re: HB 1094

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I respectfully ask you to OPPOSE HB 1094 and not send it to the floor for a vote.

If this bill passes, law-abiding gun owners will have to begin surrendering their magazines by July, or face confiscation by the state police and a felony charge. This alone makes law-abiding citizens instant outlaws, since many firearms use magazines with a capacity of more than 10 rounds as part of their original manufacture. It will also place an undue burden on law enforcement agencies already maxed out with real crime to form units that will go door to door asking law-abiding citizens if they possess such magazines and to turn them over.

This irrational proposal would not only ban the sale of these magazines, but would make simple possession a felony. Any gun owner (including off-duty police officers) found in possession of any magazine capable of holding more than 10 rounds will be in violation of this proposed law, regardless of whether it was legally purchased. Law-abiding citizens always legally purchase firearms and accessories but OUTLAWS don't and they will continue to obtain these magazines even after passage of such a bill.

This measure will also affect non-gun owners as all Connecticut tax payers will be forced to foot the bill for the extraordinary process of having police confiscate -- from law-abiding citizens -- the millions of magazines already in the state.

Making matters worse, manufacturers including Colt, C Products, Mec-Gar, OKAY Industries and Metalform will be directly affected by this legislation. That means a loss of jobs and tax revenue to the state. If manufacturers are not able to produce magazines for the civilian market, they will be forced to close their doors to all markets, including the United States military.

Arbitrarily limiting magazine capacity and threatening law-abiding gun owners with confiscation and felony charges borders on being unconstitutional and an infringement on our Second Amendment. These magazines are utilized every day for home defense and the shooting sports. A comprehensive study by the Centers for Disease Control -- hardly a pro-gun entity -- looked at the all gun-control measures, including this ban, and concluded that none could be proven to reduce crime. Another study, commissioned by Congress, found that bans were not effective since "the banned weapons and magazines were never used in more than a modest fraction of all gun murders." Maryland, a state no less draconian in its gun laws than Connecticut, opposed passage of this bill and it was defeated. I urge you to do the same -- don't JF this bill, defeat it before it creates a whole new class of felons.

If you want to make a law about high-capacity magazines, write a bill that makes it illegal to use a high-capacity magazine in the commission of a CRIME of any kind and tack on extra penalties for using one. Support a mandatory 10-year sentence for anyone convicted of using a gun in a crime. Fully fund the statewide illegal firearms task force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TV', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas R. Violante
New Haven, CT